



Minuteman

Magazine

For the soldiers & airmen of the Massachusetts National Guard

The Force of Freedom

Fall 2003

**Long Distance
Diplomacy**

Stand Down 2003

**Welcome
Home**

STANDING TALL FOR VETERANS: STAND DOWN 2003

Story and Photos By 1st Lt. Anthony Falvey,
PAO, 79th Troop Command, Wellesley, Mass.

Rotch Park, between Randolph and Albany Streets in the South End of Boston, Mass., has been the traditional location of "Stand Down" for the past eleven years. Stand down is a military term that describes a comparatively safe and protected area where battle-weary soldiers found rest, nourishment and companionship. This stand down, held annually at Rotch Park, serves a similar purpose.

Typically, in the early days of August, veterans (mostly homeless) are invited to receive a variety of free services during the two-day event. The services include free meals, clothes, walk-in Veteran's Administration (VA) healthcare registration and treatment, legal assistance, housing workshops and voter registration. "Stand down provides a powerful boost to a veteran who has fallen on hard times," commented Don Creed, an Air Force veteran from Boston.

A further boost in coordination with the stand down event and popular with the veterans in attendance, was the presence of the Massachusetts Army National Guard. Carlos Beverly, an Army veteran from Boston mentioned that, "Noticing the Guard soldiers setting up the tents and standing guard brought back fond memories of active duty."

Massachusetts Guard members from the 1164th (Framingham) and 1166th (Ware) Transportation Companies, 125th Quartermaster Company (Webster), 704th (Natick) and 321st (Pittsfield) Quartermaster Detachments, and the 101st Quartermaster Battalion Headquarters (Framingham) supported the event. "Stand down is such an important event for the veterans here, and they appreciated our assistance," said Sgt. Craig Murdock, a Chicopee resident and member of the 125th.



Staff Sgt. Julianne Magnusson, a resident of Lunenburg, Mass and member of the 125th Quartermaster Company (Webster, Mass.), assists with constructing tents during Stand Down 2003, an event focused on aiding veterans with assistance programs ranging from on-site health care to employment opportunities.

The Massachusetts Army National Guard's participation in Stand Down 2003 began with construction of 14 tents before the official start of the event. Once tent construction was completed, attention shifted to the proper scheduling of soldiers to guard the tents and valuable VA equipment inside them. The Medical Service and Vision Care tent contained a good portion of valuable medical equipment, supplies and spectacles. Amazingly, large assortments of free prescription glasses were on hand to ensure that a veteran in need of glasses would not go away empty handed.

Homeless veterans could also find a place to live. "The important goals of stand down are to ensure that it happens every year and to help homeless veterans find shelter," stated Carol Kline, a social worker for the VA who lives in Boston. Kline has been involved with every Rotch Park stand down. "As long as stand down continues to happen every year, the veterans will continue to spread the word about all the wonderful free services that are provided," Kline added. "Our housing assistance/placement is a success. Out of 1,000 Veterans who came to us in need of housing, only 25 were evicted."

The Executive Director of stand down, Ralph Cooper, agrees, "With every stand down that is organized and held, the smoother the event becomes the next year. Veterans better understand how the event functions, and become more aware of the services and how important those services are to getting back on the right track."

Cooper also believed that the veterans appreciated the presence of the Guard soldiers, "The presence of the guardsmen reminds the veterans of their time as soldiers. The familiarity of the soldiers is a heartwarming, memorable experience for them."

The soldiers from the Mass. Guard were also aware of the event's benefits. "To serve with and support the stand down has been so rewarding," said Spc. Timothy Martinez a Worcester resident and member of the 1164th. "Stand down is a truly important event for the veterans - especially the homeless - they continuously thank us [the Mass. Guard soldiers] for being at the event." Martinez added, "I'm looking forward to volunteering for stand down next year."

Another year and another successful stand down. The Director for stand down, Vernell Baker, reflected on the history and future of the event, "Stand down was started in the summer of 1988 by two Vietnam veterans (Robert Van Keuren and Dr. Jon Nachison) who organized and held the first event in San Diego. Their tradition of active concern for veterans must continue through events like this." Baker added that the community is vital to the success of stand down, "The more a community is involved with stand down, the more services for veterans will not be overlooked."



Pfc. Sean Meade, a resident of West Brookfield, Mass. and member of the 1166th Transportation Company (Ware, Mass.), watches over the medical tent at Stand Down 2003, an event focused on providing veterans with a multitude of services.



On the Cover

Spc. Ijpe Dekoe (background) and Spc. Nate Manni (foreground) train on the M-24 weapon system, during phase one of the Massachusetts run Sniper course.

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Welcome Home

379th Engineering Returns

Story and Photos by Spc. Matt Benedetti, JFHQ-MA
The Indian summer on Cape Cod was a welcome change from the oppressive desert heat members of the 379th Engineering Company had become accustomed to. Family and friends turned out to give the soldiers a warm welcome at the Bourne Armory on Oct. 1. The reunion was bittersweet due to the loss of Sgt. 1st Class Robert Rooney during the last days of the tour in Kuwait. Rooney died in an industrial accident at the port.

While sad that Rooney was not with them, the soldiers were happy to see friends and family again.

Cars honked and passersby voiced encouragement to the unit as they marched off the bus and towards their loved ones. Emotional exchanges took place between family and returning soldiers as they got reacquainted. Instead of going to bed with sandy blankets, desert spiders and stateside memories, the Bourne heroes would finally be sleeping at home.

"I get to see my newborn daughter and my son Christopher. It's a thrill to be home," said Spc. Scott Douglas of Abington.

1st Sgt. Lee Curll of Lunenburg was excited to see his 6-year-old granddaughter, Kastiana. "It's great to be home and see the turnout. We appreciate the homecoming," he said.

Spc. Phil King of Pembroke described the desolate landscape, "At times it seemed so strange, like something you would see on the set of 'Star Wars'. The climate would change from calm to a raging wind with blinding sand. The sandstorms

would come in like an orange wall of sand," he said. At times temperatures reached 150 degrees.

"The heat was intense. The thermometer broke due to the heat on a particularly brutal day," said Sgt. Ray Rose of Wrentham. "We were concerned with the camel spiders, snakes and black scorpions that seemed to be all over the place. Before going to sleep it was important to remember to put your socks at the top of your boots to prevent unwanted visits. After reaching Ft. Drum, the first thing I did was take in a deep breath. It felt great. The air is awful in Kuwait and it is nice to be home and see green. When I got home to my house, I played catch with my kids and it was awesome," Rose added.



Msg. Lee Curll
and 6yr old
daughter Kastiana.
- Lunenburg, Ma



Members of the 211th MP Company march in formation during their homecoming ceremony.

"211th MP Battalion Really Rocks"

Story and Photos by Spc. Matt Benedetti, JFHQ-MA
On a postcard New England autumn afternoon the soldiers of the 211th Military Police Battalion returned from service in Iraq to an emotional homecoming at Camp Curtis Guild in Reading. This most recent deployment is the third mission since Sept. 11, 2001 for the seasoned men and women of the Lexington-based unit.

The 75 guardsmen had been assigned to Afghanistan, Iraq and the U.S. The homecoming ceremony was attended by family members and friends who were wearing red t-shirts that declared "Thank you 211th MP YOU REALLY ROCK".

Spc. Derek O'Brien of Hudson N.H., surrounded by family said "It feels awesome, there is nothing like the U.S. Sometimes we don't realize how much we have. It's a great country."

"It's great to be home, there is nothing like it," said Spc. Mike Sibeleski. of Manchester N.H.

Battalion Executive Officer Maj. Brian O'Hare of Lancaster has been deployed for the better part of two years. He was flanked by his wife and two boys as he took in the celebration. "Coming home is a wonderful but surreal experience. We are going through the motions right now. It is great to be home," he said.

Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Jack Hammond of Burlington was emotional when he spotted the crowd of supporters as they marched in. "Our unit may be the only one to serve in all three theaters of war. I want to thank the tremendous soldiers of the 211th for doing a great job over the past 18 months. I ask you to be proud of them," Hammond said.



Spc. Scott Douglass Abington, Ma "see my new born daughter and my son Christopher. It's a thrill to be home"



Balloons filled the sky over the Southbridge Armory on Saturday, Aug. 16. spouses, children and friends of the 747th Military Police Co. released those balloons in celebration as they ran into the arms of each of the approximately 160 soldiers.

The unit was deployed for about six months in Afghanistan providing security at the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Task Force Headquarters and the Kabul Military Training Center.

It was dangerous business, but Capt. Margaret Oglesby brought all of her soldiers home, safe and sound. But she warned the families that it might take a little while for their loved ones to “decompress” from the combat mission.

“I also want to thank the families. I want to thank you for your sacrifice. I know that it was just as hard on you as on us,” Oglesby said.

The ceremony was kept to less than five minutes so the soldiers could be re-united with their loved ones.



Sgt. Tom Wilkinson gets a big hug from his wife Lynn after serving 6 months on active duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The bus broke down.

Story and Photos by Spc. Matt Benedetti, JFHQ-MA

After nearly six months of active duty in the Persian Gulf, members of the 220th Quartermaster Team were stuck on the side of the highway in Hopkinton on Saturday, Aug. 9. Their families waited anxiously at the unit's armory in Plymouth.

If not for a friendly school bus driver, the 20 or so soldiers might have had a longer wait. But the bus driver saw the soldiers at the side of the road and pulled over. Two hours later than scheduled Saturday, the soldiers were finally in the arms of their wives, husbands, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, boyfriends, girlfriends – just about everyone that they love.

The water purification team received mobilization orders last February. Margaret Sweeney, the wife of Sgt. 1st Class Dan Sweeney, the unit's commander, has been wearing her husband's identification tags since he left.

“He was searching around the house like crazy for his dog tags before he left. I found them later

and have been wearing them ever since.” Said Mrs. Sweeney, who coordinated the unit's Family Support Group, said it was a long tough wait for the families, but they stuck together. She had to do things that he would normally do, like get the inspection sticker on his truck and drive it around now and then. “I wanted everything to be as normal as possible when he got back.”

Soon things will never again be the same for Spc. Kenneth Wooley. He is getting married to Christine Gardener.

“She is just a level-headed wonderful young woman and I am so happy for the both of them,” said his father, Sgt. 1st Class Brian Wooley, a 38-year Guard soldier.

His son had a long trip home. There were two stops in the Middle East, two stops in Europe, a stop in New England, three stops in Virginia, a stop in Philadelphia, another airplane hop to New York, and finally a bus trip to Fort Drum. After 48

hours of traveling, the unit still had the bus ride home. That is the bus that broke down. By the time he got back to Plymouth, Ken Wooley had better things to do than talk to a reporter.

The unit's commander said that the soldiers pumped more than three million gallons of water to soldiers in Iraq. The soldiers also ran transportation missions, worked at a fuel site, and did pretty much everything else that needed to get done.

“The weather was hot and boring. It was 125 degrees everyday. But everyone did well. There were no heat casualties and no injuries,” Sgt. 1st Class Sweeney said. “One thing that I learned was that there is no difference between the National Guard and the regular Army. It was seamless. In fact, I think there were more of us than them over there. And we did a great job. I love the Massachusetts National Guard. In my opinion, we were the greatest organization over there.”



Friends and family members greet soldiers from the 220th Quartermaster Team outside the unit's armory. The soldiers arrived two hours later than planned because their bus broke down.

“Generally Speaking”

with the Massachusetts commanders of the Army and Air National Guard

By Spc. Matt Benedetti, JFHQ-MA

Editors Note:

Spc. Matt Benedetti recently had the opportunity to sit down with the commanders of the Massachusetts Army and Air National Guard for a brief interview. Asked both personal and professional questions, the Generals speak candidly about their careers and what they expect in the future for the Massachusetts National Guard.

Brig. Gen. Gary Pappas

Brig. Gen. Pappas is a native Bostonian and a graduate of Boston Latin, Suffolk University and Suffolk University Law School. He enlisted in the Mass. National Guard and has served as a soldier and officer since 1968. Pappas has served as brigade commander of the 42nd Division Artillery and battalion commander of the 101st and 102nd Field Artillery among other posts. He is the commander of the Massachusetts Army National Guard.

How did you first become involved in the National Guard?

My father was in the Guard, in the 101st Infantry, and was twice wounded in combat in Europe during World War II. I enlisted in the 26th MP Company. I guess you could say it is a family tradition.

The accomplishments of the Guard throughout our history and recently during the war on terror speak for themselves.

Brig. Gen. Gary Pappas

As the role of the Guard has evolved, how does your leadership approach change?

My leadership role hasn't changed much, I came in as an enlisted man and I believe that experience has helped my approach to leading the officers corps and the enlisted soldiers. I believe in hands on leadership and I hire subordinates based on that premise. I give them my confidence and trust that they will do their jobs.

Soldiers are remarkable and will find a way to get the mission accomplished. My management style has always been people oriented. I want to make sure that my soldiers have the best possible equipment and resources. I don't want a soldier

hurt or killed because we didn't supply them with the best. I want them to be candid with me when I ask a question. Listening to our soldiers is always a priority.

As guardsman have been deployed for extended tours since 9/11, have employers been as supportive as you would have hoped?

I have been pleasantly surprised by the response of employers to the soldier deployments. In some cases employers are covering pay differentials and providing extended health insurance.

Have you found the Governor and the Legislature to be supportive of the Guard?

Gov. Romney has been very supportive of the Guard and has attended almost all of the sendoffs and homecomings. It has been quite a morale boost for the soldiers. Gov. Romney and other leaders have recognized Mass. Guardsman as well prepared and professional. We should all take pride in our service.

To what do you attribute the overall success of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, as members are deployed and return during Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle?

The character of our soldiers. We have an educated and professional body of personnel. We take our civilian jobs seriously and are able to blend those skills into Guard duties. Guardsman are not isolated on an army base, but living in neighborhoods, raising families and are active in their communities.

Recently the National Guard Bureau Chief Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum has unveiled a multifaceted plan to transform the National Guard. How is Massachusetts preparing for this transition to a “joint” Army and Air Headquarters?

“Jointness” is a concept that we need to embrace as an organization. Currently we are fighting in this capacity and we will do so in the future. Recognizing the role of each branch and coordinating our efforts is essential to success. We are all under the same tent and this initiative will eliminate duplication. The Chief of Staff of the National Guard is using the Mass. Guard as a model for all states. We are working to convert headquarters into a joint command incorporating both the Army and Air Guard.



Brig. Gen. Gary Pappas



Brig. Gen.
Donald J. Quenneville

What can Guard members do to help recruit new soldiers and retain current ones?

Everyone can play an active role in spreading the word. The accomplishments of the Guard throughout our history and recently during the war on terror speak for themselves. After 9/11, everything changed in our country and the National Guard was no exception. People realized that we are the first line of defense. We have earned the recognition and respect that is long overdue.

What is your proudest moment as a Guardsman?

Last summer I was in the North End having dinner at a restaurant. Mitt Romney was not yet governor and was there with Rudolph Giuliani. A mutual friend introduced me to the former mayor of New York City. Upon being told that I was a general in the National Guard, he put down his water and said, “Thank you for your service, I know what the Guard can do.” The roomful of supporters fell silent and the memory of September 11 was on everyone's mind. I will never forget that day.

Brig. Gen. Donald J. Quenneville

Brig. Gen. Quenneville has served in numerous command positions, from squadron pilot to F-15 wing commander. Under his direction, the men and women of the Massachusetts Air National Guard 102nd Fighter Wing were awarded the 2002 Winston P. Wilson Trophy for recognition as the best fighter unit in the Air National Guard. He serves as commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard.

How have you adapted to the incorporation of the Air Guard into the Aerospace Expeditionary Force?

The Air National Guard is essential to any major operation that the Air Force undertakes. Massachusetts Air Guard personnel have a well-earned reputation for professionalism and combat capability and, as such, our units are frequently called upon to serve with their active and reserve component counterparts. Our men and women are being asked to serve on more and longer deployments and we recognize the sacrifice that they and their families are making. Corporately, we must be careful not overuse our reserve component.

How did you become involved in the Air Guard?

I was active Air Force for eight years and during my last assignment I managed the live missile-firing program at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. While managing this program I became familiar with the Air Guard. It was evident that I could enjoy more stability and continue to fly longer in the Guard. I'm from Massachusetts and the 102nd Fighter Wing was flying the same aircraft, the F-106, that I was at the time. It was a perfect fit for me.

As airman have been deployed for extended tours since 9/11, have employers been as supportive as you would have hoped?

For the most part, employers have been supportive of our Guard members. Larger companies tend to be better equipped to compensate their deployed employees than smaller businesses. That notwithstanding, most employers are eager to assist their Guard members and families.

What is the most rewarding and challenging aspect of your leadership duties as commander of the Air Guard?

The most rewarding is witnessing firsthand the incredible feats performed by the men and women of the Massachusetts Air National Guard. The most challenging is retaining these dedicated and superbly qualified people.

Do you expect to continue deploying a large number of airmen overseas during the coming year?

I expect that steady state overseas deployments will continue in support of AEF taskings and Massachusetts Air Guard personnel will be called upon to participate. Exact numbers of deploying personnel will depend on the extent to which the U.S. military is involved in the global war on terrorism.

"The Air National Guard is essential to any major operation that the Air Force undertakes."

Brig. Gen. Donald J. Quenneville

The first sorties of the war on terror originated from Otis AFB on 9/11. Do you feel this mission had an impact on the public view of the Air National Guard?

On 9/11 we were confronted with an enemy that launched their attack from within our borders. As commander at Otis on 9/11, I cannot adequately express how proud I am of the personnel on duty that day and the weeks following the attack. It was a tense time for America. The public, especially those in the immediate vicinity, became reacquainted with us and appreciated that we were there. Their support was phenomenal.

As commander of the Mass. Air National Guard what will be your goals for the members serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle?

Every time they are called upon, they respond well. It really is a testament to their dedication and patriotism. It is imperative that their transition to a mobilized status is as smooth as we can make it. Of equal importance is to ensure that their family members are taken care of while the members are serving.

How is the Massachusetts Air National Guard transitioning to a "joint" headquarters, with the unveiling of a new plan to transform the National Guard announced by Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum?

First of all, I am a believer in "jointness," so I am eager for this transformation. The Massachusetts National Guard benefited from Col. Manuel Constantine's [the Chief of Staff for the Massachusetts National Guard] involvement as part of a core group of guardsmen who developed the plan that would efficiently implement General Blum's mandate to consolidate the headquarters of each state. As a result, our initial steps for implementation have been smooth. Overall transition will take a few years, but I am confident that we will achieve the desired outcome.

110th Maintenance Company Completes 500th Work Order in Iraq

by Sgt 1st Class Michael Euvrard, 110th Maintenance Company

Saturday, July 26, 2003 was a momentous day for the 110th Maintenance Company, based out of Ayer, Mass. and currently serving in Iraq; they completed their 500th work order.

Since their arrival at Tallil Air Base on May 28, the 110th Maintenance Company provided critical maintenance to units stationed at and transitioning through Tallil Air Base. The mission of the unit is incredibly diverse; from providing repair parts, to actually performing maintenance, to fabrication and installation, to the recovery of disabled vehicles, the 110th has done it all.

The 500th Work Order was completed on the 100th day in the theater of operations. What makes this even more remarkable is the fact that the unit had only been based at Tallil for 59 days. The unit marked the occasion with a small gathering of individuals involved in the 500th job.

Led by 2nd Lt. Gerard Hill (Dorchester, Mass), Base Maintenance Platoon Leader, the team for the 500th job consisted of Sgt. Errick Dubois (Fitchburg, Mass), Sgt. David Laraba (Wichendon, Mass), Spc. Luis Bonilla (Gardner, Mass), and Spc. Andrew Lapre (Westfield, Mass).

The job was accepted and processed into the unit by the Maintenance Control Office, led by 1st Lt. Ivan Sera-Perez (Alexandria, Mass). The repair parts for the job were ordered, processed and received by the Class IX Section, led by 1st Lt. Roy Erickson (Westwood, Mass).

The actual job was to repair an M1025 HMMWV owned by the 933rd Military Police Company - an Illinois National Guard Unit also deployed at Tallil. The removal and installation of the transfer case, under the supervi-

sion of Chief Warrant Officer James Slater (Dalton, Mass) took twelve hours to complete, and Staff Sgt. Donald Smith (North Hampton, Mass) of the Maintenance Control Section conducted the final inspection.

Since its activation on February 10th, the 110th Maintenance Company has been stationed at Fort Drum, NY, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, and Tallil, Iraq. The unit continues to maintain a positive outlook despite the adverse conditions in central Iraq.



Soldiers from the 110th Maintenance Company, based out of Ayer, Mass. and currently serving in Iraq, celebrate the completion of their 500th work order. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Euvrard (Hubbardston, Mass).

Front row left to right: Sgt. Eva Brown (Worcester, Mass), Spc. Kristina Sleeper (West Townsend, Mass), Capt. Myles McHugh (Wrentham, Mass), and 1st Sgt. Normand Dubois (Ayer, Mass).

Back row left to right: Staff Sgt. Donald Smith (North Hampton, Mass), Spc. Luis Bonilla (Gardner, Mass), Spc. David Laraba (Wichendon, Mass), Spc. Andrew Lapre (Westfield, Mass), and Sgt. Errick Dubois (Fitchburg, Mass).

By Maj. Heather Weilbacher, JFHQ-MA
Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Tedeschi

Today's war on terrorism takes military units to battlefields where precision marksmanship is paramount. In August 2003, the Sniper School Mobile Training Team out of North Little Rock, Ark. traveled to Fort Devens to conduct the first of two phases of sniper training for Guardsmen from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Arizona, and Vermont. Phase I, a two-week training phase, focused on marksmanship training with the M24 Sniper Weapon System while Phase II will place emphasis on a combination of marksmanship and field craft training.

At the successful completion of Phase II, to be held in June 2004, all graduates will be awarded a patch for their uniform and the Additional Skill Identifier - B4 Sniper. In addition to regular infantry sniper training, the course offers additional training in urban and civil disturbance operations.

"Sniper teams are the eyes, ears, and trigger finger of their commanders. It is the team's responsibility to find, fix, and finish enemy targets," said Staff Sgt. David Broseus of the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center in Arkansas and the primary sniper school instructor at the Fort Devens training site in Massachusetts. "A sniper team consists of a sniper and a spotter. The sniper delivers long-range precision fire on key targets and the spotter observes and adjusts fire, and maintains the data books."

Pre-requisites for soldiers to attend sniper school include a minimum of 70 percent in each event of the Army Physical Fitness Test, a rank from private first class to sergeant first class, and a minimum GTR score of 100. They must also be an 11B/Infantryman, 11M/Fighting Vehicle Infantryman, 19D/Calvary Scout, or 18 series/Special Forces soldier.

"It takes a well-motivated individual who is disciplined and possesses the physical and mental rigor for the job," said Sgt. Brandon House, an instructor from Arkansas. "To be successful as a sniper team, they must be an excellent shot and think well of themselves. The team must also know how to operate together under stressful conditions."



Sniper Instructor Spc. CJ McConvy, A Co. 1/182 INF, keeps a watchful eye on the targets as students try to master their skills.

Long Distance DIPLOMACY



The sniper school instructors are not only diverse and specialized in their experience but they also come from different geographical locations including Arkansas, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Texas. Sniper school instructors must be graduates of the course and successfully complete an instructor's certification process.

"The sniper school instructors are very knowledgeable and they know what they are doing," said student candidate Staff Sgt. Paul Dyson, an English teacher at University of Massachusetts in Boston and member of the Guard for eight years. "The Army's approach to education and training is well-structured, well-balanced, and possesses well-qualified instructors."

Spc. Nate Manni, a sniper school candidate from West Barnstable, has served three years of active service as an 11B/Infantryman with the 82nd Airborne Division, one year in the National Guard, and continues his training in the Guard while attending college. "When I have the time off, I like to attend military schools," Manni said. "Two of the most challenging aspects here at sniper school are learning formulas and range estimation. The sniper must have confidence in the spotter and the spotter must have the confidence to make the calls."

The sniper school soldiers student can take their course anywhere in the U.S. and are able to run the same type of training as they would at their home training center in Arkansas. "It's a team effort," said Staff Sgt. Broseus, "and we could not have done this without Maj. Barry Shea and the rest of the support team."

Fellow sniper team member, Spc. Ilpe Dekoe from South Kingston, R.I., also attends college and has been a member of the Guard for three and a half years as a 19D/Cavalry Scout. "You need to have a set standard operating procedure," Dekoe said. "Getting the communication down is important to what you are going to say and do because that is what speeds up the operation and makes it run more smoothly."

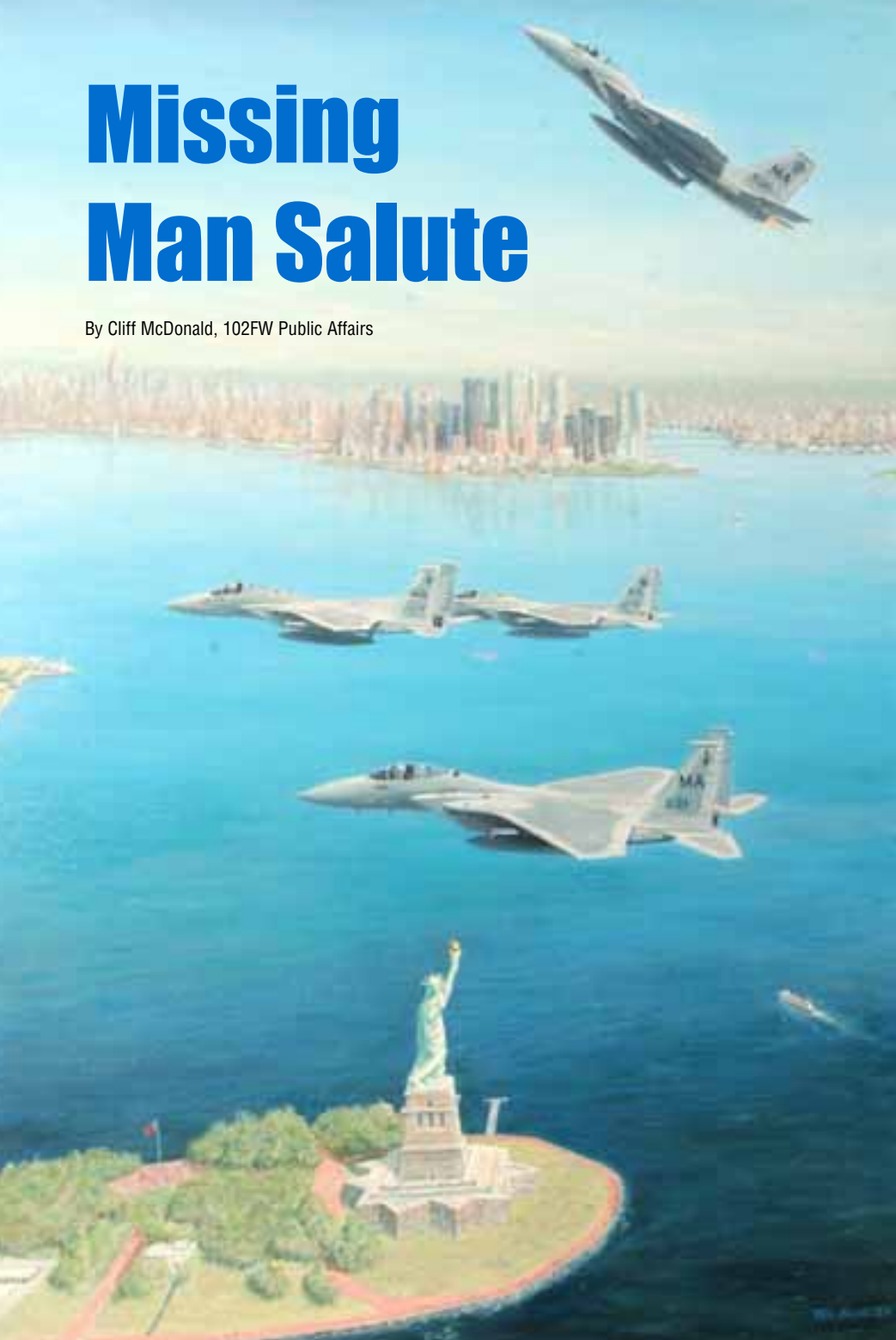
Shea is the state marksmanship coordinator of the Mass. Army National Guard. The sniper school got funding from DCSOPS; chow support from CW5 Ronald Correia, Staff Sgt. Nicholas Raggucci, Staff Sgt. David Marsters as well as ammunition and weapons, range supplies, and targets from Master Sgt. Paul Khouri (USPFO), Sgt. First Class Victor Sammartino (CSMS), Sgt. First Class Laura Miller and Staff Sgt. Darlene Tonello (HHC STARC); and range cards, log books, and field manuals and publications supplied by Sgt. Maj. Vanessa Markarian from the division of information management.



Sniper school candidates take time from their shooting to pose for a shot of our own.

Missing Man Salute

By Cliff McDonald, 102FW Public Affairs



For all of us, the date Sept. 11, 2001 will be eternally etched in our minds. The heinous acts of terrorism that were committed that day resulted in the loss of nearly three thousand lives, destroyed or damaged many landmarks and ushered in feelings of insecurity across our nation. For decades people will exchange stories about: where were you and what did you do? Each of us will seal away memories and emotions from that day. This is the story of one man, artist Eric Michelsen of Cotuit, Mass., and how he responded to the events of Sept 11.

He paints boats and trains, but what really excites him are things that fly. It's something Eric

Michelsen always knew he wanted to do, photograph, draw and paint aircraft. An uncle took him to an air show at Otis Air Force Base when he was ten years old. Armed with his first camera he began shooting away.

Now almost 50 years later it's more than a hobby, he's an accomplished aviation artist who devotes much of his time to painting the aircraft of the 102nd Fighter Wing at Otis Air National Guard Base.

Michelsen's aviation art stands out for its strong painterly quality and powerful, technically accurate imagery. Michelsen's latest painting,

"Missing Man Salute" is exciting and more, depicting four F-15s from Otis Air National Guard Base performing the missing man maneuver over New York's Statue of Liberty.

Michelsen explained, "The art was painted to commemorate the efforts of the 102nd Fighter Wing on and after September 11, 2001 for their response to the terrorists attacks on the World Trade Center, and the subsequent twenty four hours a day, seven days a week combat air patrols over the northeastern United States." Michelsen's early interest in photography and aviation art also guided him towards a career in the military. He joined the Army Reserves in 1966 as a photographer; he later signed on with the Air National Guard in 1977 as a traditional Guardsman.

He is a former member of the 102nd, having served with the unit as noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Communication Flight, Visual Information Section. He retired from the wing in 1990. Michelsen lives near the base, and is accustomed to seeing aircraft on takeoffs and approaches to and from the airfield flying over his Cape Cod home. The sound never disturbed him; it was one of the things he enjoyed most about living in so close to Otis.

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001 he noticed two F-15s scramble from the base heading south. There wasn't anything unusual about the scramble, after all the 102nd had for the past 30 years been on alert and responsible for the air defense of the northeast sector of the United States, and doing both real world and practice intercepts in the area. However, on this day Michelsen said he had a feeling within him that something out of the ordinary was taking place. "Perhaps," he said, "it was the high rate of speed that the two jets accelerated at as they disappeared high into the clear blue sky." Michelsen continued to watch until the fighter jets disappeared out of sight.

In the 1960s and 70s during the Cold War, fighter pilots from Otis often scrambled from the base to intercept Russian Bear bombers flying reconnaissance missions off the Atlantic coastline. The base's location on Cape Cod is ideal because of its strategic coastal location in the northeast sector of the United States. On Sept. 11, 2003 it was the only active air defense base on the east coast between the Canadian border and the Washington DC area. Nevertheless, people in the area knew it had been decades since the wing had launched its jets against a real threat. Many local residents questioned whether it was time for the military to pack up and close the Cape Cod base.

A short while later Michelsen received the shocking news about the attack on the World Trade Center, and he knew at once for where the two F-15s had departed. He was also well aware of the transition to a wartime posture that the nearby fighter wing would experience.

It has become widely known that the alert jets from the 102nd that scrambled to intercept the hijacked airliners were first on the scene above New York City and remained on station for several hours to provide increased security against any other threats. What is lesser known are the events that occurred at Otis that transformed the unit's peacetime posture into the nation's first line of Homeland Defense.

Beginning at 8:46 a.m. on September 11, the fighter wing demonstrated, for the entire world to see, that the 102nd, "Team Otis", was ready to defend America's freedom against her adversaries. In the hours that followed the team provided continual airborne presence over the northeast United States while it made ready for combat fourteen of the most capable fighters in the U.S. Air Force inventory.

While the alert jets orbited Manhattan, training sorties were terminated and recalled. As these initial actions were occurring, the senior leadership of the unit was developing a comprehensive plan to ready the wing to defend the homeland against an unknown enemy.

Maintenance and logistics personnel began the system transformation of aircraft from their training configuration to one fitting for combat. Jets that were undergoing periodic maintenance were made whole so that they could become part of our nation's defensive might. While supporting the launch and recovery of aircraft providing a continual airborne presence, maintenance and logistics personnel worked long into the night to provide a ramp full of mission capable, combat-configured aircraft.

In operations, the senior members of that group developed a staffing plan that ensured continuous combat air patrols for the next several days in response to NORAD taskings. Tactics were discussed, rules of engagement were reviewed, aircrews shifting schedules were developed and an operational readiness inspection tested command and control network was put into place.

With the sudden requirement for round-the-clock mouths to feed, the services personnel stoked up the ovens and began to provide four meals per day to all who needed them.

Personnel, finance, civil engineering, communication, and medical personnel were providing 24-hour support, often assisting outside of their normal work area. If it needed to be done, there was a volunteer to handle it.

In the first three days of the national crisis, while the nations civil aviation was grounded, the 101st Fighter Squadron of the 102nd flew 46 missions and more than 160 hours, protecting every major city in the Northeast Air Defense Sector. For Michelsen, days turned into weeks that soon became months, he often stayed awake late into

the night just to watch the sleek and graceful "Eagles" launching from the base. Many hours later the jets would return from a combat air patrol. There were always more jets continuously coming and going.

Moved by the events of Sept 11, and subsequent, Michelsen began thinking about how he could personally contribute something through his art to the overall sacrifices being made by members of his former unit. It was at the suggestion of Brig. Gen. Sam Shiver, then state commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard, that he consider the missing man maneuver as the subject of his painting.

102nd Colonels Anthony Schiavi, then Operations Group commander and Al Wickel, then wing vice commander were both thrilled about the idea. Together they made it possible for Michelsen to receive an F-15 orientation flight to photograph a formation of "Eagles" rehearsing the missing man maneuver over the coast of Cape Cod.

Michelsen will present the original 51-inch by 36-inch oil on canvas painting as a gift to the 102nd Fighter Wing. A signed and numbered limited edition of 750 archival 24-inch x 16-inch prints of this painting will be available for sale. Several other paintings by Michelsen adorn the walls of Otis Air National Guard Base buildings. While still a member of the unit he painted a 30-foot mural in what was then the Massachusetts Air National Guard State Headquarters building on Otis. The mural depicts many of the aircraft flown by the 102nd.

In 1995 he was commissioned by the 101st Fighter Squadron to paint a four-and-a-half by nine-foot oil depicting an F-15 Eagle at 25,000 feet over Cape Cod. This painting titled "Reheat One" is prominently displayed in the entrance to the 102nd Operations Building.

Again in 2000 Michelsen was commissioned to paint a five-foot by twelve-foot mural in the Wing Conference Room. "On Guard" depicts alert F-15s scrambling from Otis on an intercept mission.

Michelsen is a member of the Air Force Art Program, the American Society of Aviation Artists, the Professional Aerial Photographers Association, and the Experimental Aircraft Association. He also serves on the board of directors of the Massachusetts Air National Guard Historical Association.

As the days since Sept 11, 2001 grow in numbers, our nation continues to heal its wounds. The trauma of that day will lessen, but never the memories.

To this extent, Michelsen is hopeful that his art can help people everywhere better cope with the suffering and pain this momentous September day evokes in so many of us.

"Six Guns A-Blazin"

By Staff Sgt. Paul T. Sanford, section chief, Battery A, 1-102 FA

The awesome power of a full battery of six 155mm howitzers simultaneously firing was heard recently at Fort Drum, N.Y.

The feat accomplished by Alpha Battery of the 1/102nd FA Battalion was unusual in that no battery has ever fired its full compliment of weapons at one time since the battalion was reformed in 1996.

Based on the "Rock Star" reception Fort Drum folks gave the battery, it seems that this was rare for any reserve artillery unit. As is the case throughout the National Guard, the major challenge of maintaining full operational capability continues to be the recruiting and retention of experienced leadership.

Brig. Gen. Gary Pappas, the Mass. Army National Guard commander, made a pilgrimage from his duties at state headquarters to personally call in the final fire mission in honor of this occasion. Pappas was once the commanding officer of Alpha Battery. This will also be one of the final times that the aging self-propelled howitzers will be fired. The transition has begun to howitzers towed by the brand-new 5-ton cab-over-engine trucks.

The high degree of esprit de corps, dedication to duty, and technical proficiency in Alpha Battery are a culmination of more than two years of concerted effort by the commanding officer and senior NCOs. Capt. Scott Sanfason, 1st Sgt. David Dicegle and Sgt. 1st Class John Ryan were the principle architects behind the goal of firing a full battery. But these objectives would not have been possible without the capable implementation by the Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lebouf, a gunnery sergeant, and Sgt. 1st Class "Smoke" Johnathon Butt.



(L-R) Maj. Mark A. Ray, battalion commander, Capt. Scott A. Sanfason, A battery commander, and Brig. Gen. Gary Pappas, commander of the Mass. Army National Guard, on the phone issuing a Battery Fire Command to all 6 guns to fire!

Photo by 1st Sgt. David F. DiCeglie, A Battery, 1/102 FA

Short Takes

www.scam.com

There is a bogus myPay Web site on the Internet. The bogus site is www.mypay.com.

Someone was recently was trying to download a leave and earnings statement. The individual logged on to the bogus www.mypay.com web-site, and was entering the social security number in the "search" bar to retrieve his LES.

The bogus site is set up to resemble the official site, with terms like "LES" and "DFAS" listed on the left side as "Recent Searches" However, if someone was to click on the "Loan" link, they would be taken to a payday loan vendor.

The vendor capture would their personal information in the process. Be careful when accessing your LES online. Use only the official myPay web-site: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.asp>.

Best Ball Tourney

On Oct. 17 the Mass. Guard's USPFO Golf Committee organized and held a Fall Best Ball Tournament for Mass. National Guard employees. This year's event was a big success with over 48 participants. The Guard committee raffled golf prizes and several original golf art caricatures to benefit the Jimmy Fund. The Guard presented a check for \$505 to the Dana-Farber. The committee includes Director Master Lou Tiberi, Co-director Master Sgt. Doug Murray, Maj. Thomas A. Devine, Del Cournoyer and Spc. Jon Bohannon.

The Army Wants Safe Drivers

Defensive driver training is available for Army National Guard employees. This distance learning Internet version allows access anytime and anywhere in the world on systems with modems as slow as 28.8 Kbps. This self-paced course can be completed in two to four hours and can be accessed at www.safety.serve.com/arnng. Individuals can contact their insurance company for potential rate discounts.

The Sapper Stakes

The 181st Engineer Battalion's annual Sapper Stakes competition was held June 20 to 22 at Camp Edwards. Squads from Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Companies competed in breaching minefields with hand-placed explosives, breaching obstacles with the bangalore, preparing anti-minefield systems for firing, laying a triple-standard concertina wire obstacle, engagement skills training, common soldier task skills and a 5-kilometer squad ruck race.

The competition was fierce and the weather was uncooperative. There were overcast skies and



Major General George Keefe holds up signed copies of the new lease extension for the Massachusetts Military Reservation (MMR) and the Memorandum of Understanding at the signing ceremony at Otis Air National Guard Base.

25 More Years

Gov. Mitt Romney signed a 25-year extension to the Massachusetts Military Reservation's Army and Air Force leases. The leases now run to 2051. A signing ceremony at Otis Air National Guard Base on the reservation was attended by Romney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Ray Fatz, Director of the Air Force Real Property Agency Albert Lowas Jr. and the superintendents of the Upper Cape Water Suppliers.

"The extension of the Army's lease at the MMR affirms the mutual commitments of the Army, the commonwealth and our neighboring communities to provide our soldiers the best possible training possible while providing the best environmental stewardship possible," Fatz said. The agreement also allows the MMR to maintain its role as an East Coast readiness facility and an economic contributor to the region, he added.

Along with the lease extension, a memorandum of understanding was also signed. The document was signed by The Adjutant General of Massachusetts, Maj. Gen. George W. Keefe and Water Superintendents from Bourne, Falmouth, Mashpee and Sandwich. This agreement will protect the 15,000-acre Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve by precluding development and ensuring that all activities in this area, including military training, do not threaten the drinking water supplies and wildlife habitat.

chilly temperatures during the first two days. It poured on the last day during the ruck race and concertina events.

But the squads pulled together and completed the tasks in true Esprit de Corps. When all was

said and done, Apache Red Two, a squad from Alpha Co., was victorious. The weekend ended with the awarding of the 2003 Sapper Stakes plaque to Staff Sgt. Michael Spence, the Apache Red Two squad leader, and a wet cookout for the entire battalion.

Photo by CW2 Richard Woodlock, JFHQ-MA

Col. Michael R. Boulanger awarded the Bronze Star

By Tech. Sgt. Glenn LaChapelle,
104th Fighter Wing PAO

Col. Michael R. Boulanger, commander of the 104th Fighter Wing, has been awarded the Bronze Star by the U.S. Air Force for his exemplary leadership during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Boulanger received the award on Sept. 14 during a wing commander's call at the 104th. Brig. Gen. Donald J. Quenneville, commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard, was on

hand to present Boulanger with the medal in front of wing personnel and invited guests.

During the wing's involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom earlier this year, Boulanger was assigned to command the 387th Air Expeditionary Group in Southwest Asia. The 387th AEG was a blend of attack and reconnaissance forces, consisting of close to 500 104th personnel and totaling around 1,300. Eleven of the 104th's A-10 aircraft also deployed to support this mission.

Boulanger received the medal for displaying, "remarkable courage, determination and leadership" in counter theater ballistic missile

operations, according to the award citation. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 387th also provided over 892 close air support missions repulsing enemy counter attacks, destroying enemy firing positions, personnel and anti-aircraft artillery pieces. The group is also credited with supporting the recovery of two downed airmen and other combat search and rescue missions. Throughout hostilities, the group did not lose a single aircraft due to hostile fire and suffered no serious safety mishaps.

The Bronze Star Medal recognizes acts of heroism performed in ground combat and single acts of merit and meritorious service.

VICTORY CHALLENGE 2003

by Maj. Charles Cody, Personnel Command

The Mass. Army National Guard needs every soldier, every NCO, and every officer to help increase enlistments. Now, more than ever, during this time of global conflict and record setting operation tempo, the Guard is helping ensure that our freedoms and standard of living remain unshaken and sure.

The Massachusetts Army National Guard has soldiers deployed all over the globe fighting the war on terror. So many of our soldiers have given so much to help achieve the decisive victories we have witnessed over the last eight months. In order to maintain our momentum in these undertakings, we must dig a little deeper to help meet our end strength goals.

So much of what we do is predicated on meeting these numbers. Everything from force structure, to school seats, to annual training opportunities relies upon troop strength. It is to that end that National Guard Bureau has initiated VICTORY CHALLENGE 2003.

Victory Challenge is recruiting drive that is designed to jump start our lead generation process and in turn reward soldiers who contribute to this effort. There is a national media blitz that will feature increased print ads and direct mailings. In fact, every soldier in the Guard will be receiving a brochure detailing the challenge and outlining the reward. We will also be advertising in movie theaters, on the radio and TV, as well as local print ads and internet ads.

There are two levels of awards that the soldier can win.

Silver Level Award:

Presented to the soldier that refers three leads that become enlistments between June 18 and Nov. 30.

Soldier will receive:

Directors Victory Challenge Coin
Leather Victory Jacket
Framed flag flown over the nations capital
Victory Challenge Plaque/trophy
ARNG Warm up suit and shirt

Gold Level Award:

Presented to the soldier that refers five leads that become enlistments between June 18 and Nov. 30.

Soldier will receive:

Airborne OR air assault school
NASCAR Race trip to Las Vegas
Custom Back Pack with removable camel-back
Custom "YOU CAN" Gym Bag
Everything else from the Silver Level Award

As with any military endeavor, the key to making this initiative successful is command emphasis at every level. Rest assured that recruiting is the number one priority for Maj. Gen. George W. Keefe, The Adjutant General, and Brig. Gen. Gary Pappas, commander of the Mass. Army National Guard.

The Recruiting and Retention force stands ready to assist you in any way possible.

Environmental Policy Statement

The Massachusetts Army National Guard is a trained, professional force ready to accomplish its missions with citizen-soldiers committed to preserving the timeless traditions and values of service to our nation and communities. While demonstrating sound environmental stewardship, our mission is to maintain properly trained, equipped, and disciplined forces for domestic emergencies, or for prompt mobilization for war.

The Massachusetts Army National Guard is committed to continual improvement and prevention of pollution. The Massachusetts Army National Guard will comply, and where practical, exceed all relevant environmental laws, regulations, and other requirements to which our organization subscribes. This will be accomplished by using environmental management procedures to improve and monitor our environmental performance.

Personnel are expected to be stewards of environmental protection by being responsible for understanding and implementing current procedures, practices and policies and by bringing deficiencies of operations to the attention of top management.

We will work aggressively with local, state, and federal agencies, environmental interest groups, and private industry in order to communicate to the public our goal of long-term environmental quality and improvement.

We pledge to monitor our performance as an ongoing activity and provide a framework for establishing and reviewing quality and environmental objectives and targets.

George W. Keefe
Major General, MAANG
The Adjutant General

A New Sheriff in Town

Story and Photo by CW2 Richard Woodlock, JFHQ-MA

After more than 20 years Massachusetts National Guard field artillery, Lt. Col. Sterling MacLeod took the reins of Recruiting and Retention Command during a recent ceremony at Camp Edwards, Cape Cod.

Simultaneously, with the assumption of duties at recruiting and retention, MacLeod's team is moving their offices from the Lexington Armory to Joint Forces Headquarters in Milford. He expects the move will help facilitate better access to other Guard assets and provide direct access to all directorates and the National Guard chain of command.

MacLeod has already instituted a few policies to enhance recruiting. Re-enlistment bonuses will now be available for military police, infantry and truck drivers. Recruiters will be embedded with units and there will be increased advertisement through all means, including radio and television. MacLeod also hopes to add a second high-visibility recruiting HUMVEE and another rock-climbing wall like those already seen at recruiting functions around the state. The National Guard's nation-wide Victory Challenge

program that offers incentives such as promotion, enrollment in airborne or air assault schools, and honorary membership of the National Guard Winston Cup # 54 racecar pit crew, will also boost enlistments and retain quality soldiers.

Along with assuming his new duties MacLeod passed the 1/101st Field Artillery standard to Lt. Col. Daniel Dupont. Dupont assume control of the battalion after recently completing a transition from M109- A5 155mm self-propelled howitzers to a smaller M102, 105mm towed howitzer weapon system.

"I'm leaving an organization I spent most of my military career with," said MacLeod, "but I leave satisfied that I'm leaving the incoming commander a unit at 100 percent strength. I will miss the camaraderie of the associates I've known for the past 20 years."

Dupont was commissioned in 1982 and has held various jobs in the National Guard field artillery community, not only in Massachusetts, but also in the New Hampshire and Tennessee. Dupont comes to 1/101st Field Artillery after serving as the 42nd Division Artillery Headquarters S-3. "With mobilizations, we have a high profile. I look

forward to the challenges and missions that we are tasked to perform," Dupont said. "I recognize our viability as a unit is dependent on retention of our quality soldiers and enlistment of new soldiers for the next generation."



Lt. Col. Sterling MacLeod receives the unit standard as he assumes command of the Recruiting and Retention command.

Old Friends, New Beginnings

Story and Photos By 1st Lt. Anthony Falvey,
79th Troop Command PAO

I met Matthew King when he was a specialist and a heavy-wheeled vehicle mechanic in the 1164th Transportation Co. I was a recently commissioned second lieutenant and his new platoon leader.

SpC. King had plenty of questions about getting a commission. I gave him some answers and advice before I left for my officer basic course. When I returned from OBC in Dec 2001, SpC. King had decided to seek a commission. He started officer candidate school in April 2002.



Newly commissioned 2nd Lt. Matthew King is surrounded by family and relatives after his commissioning ceremony.

This summer he left a message on my voice mail. Officer Candidate King was requesting my presence for his officer candidate school graduation.

The ceremony was at the Camp Edwards post theater in June. The audience listened as the guest speakers told of the demanding training of OCS. The candidates would now be further challenged as second lieutenants.

Brig. Gen. Gary Pappas, the commander of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, told the new officers about the jump from candidate to officer.

"The responsibilities that you all will be dealing with as officers will be incredible, he said. "Learn your branch and, most importantly, find yourself a good non-commissioned officer. The NCO's are the backbone of the Army and all of you will gain knowledge from them."

When the ceremony ended, I found newly commissioned 2nd Lt. King with family and friends. He was in a good mood. He talked a bit about his officer candidate school experiences.

"At OCS during Phase I, the instructors are straight forward. They ask who wants to truly be here and who wants to go home," he said. "My class started out with 70 candidates. At graduation there were only 25. Twenty-five dynamic, highly motivated junior officers, ready to meet new demands."

2nd Lt. King was pleased to see me. We both remembered when he first inquired about OCS.

"I can't explain to you how rewarding the OCS program is," he said. "I have never worked so hard in my life for something and felt so great at the end."

2nd Lt. King branched quartermaster and serves with the 1060th Transportation Co.



Master Sgt. Alan E. Jackson, a tactical non-commissioned officer with the Massachusetts Army National Guard's OCS program, shakes the hand of newly commissioned 2nd Lt. Matthew King

Guardsmen Respond To Motor Vehicle Accident

By Staff Sgt. Robert Cree, 1-104th INF (L)

What would you do? You're driving down the highway and you come upon an accident with a vehicle in flames. As you get closer you see it's a family of three stuck inside. Now what would you do? There are people watching, but not helping.

What would you do? Fortunately for the real world family involved in a similar accident there were two National Guard soldiers who happened by. They not only knew what to do, but they put their own personal safety aside to save this family.

It happened on July 1, 2003 as Sgt. James J. Fitzell and Spc. Todd Philbrick were returning from a coffee shop down the street from Camp Edwards on Route 28 in Bourne. Not unlike the scenario described above, they had to fight through a crowd of people warning them not to go near the burning car. "I was amazed that nobody else was doing anything, and we both knew we had to do something." (who said this)

As they got out of their vehicle, Fitzell and Philbrick agreed that Fitzell would put out the fire while Philbrick, a part-time paramedic, would tend to the injured. "Don't let me burn," said Philbrick. "If you go, I go," replied Fitzell. As Philbrick attempted to free the mother and her 9-year-old daughter, he realized the doors were jammed and called for Fitzell who ran to his car, got a crowbar and was able to pry open the doors. Using their Leatherman tools to cut free the seat belts they quickly got the two out of harm's way and guided them to safety. Unfortunately the operator of the vehicle, the father, could not be freed so easily. Philbrick tended to his injuries as the vehicle continued to burn. With no local emergency rescue personnel on

the scene and a man's life on the line, Fitzell disconnected the fuel lines and pulled the battery cables as Philbrick applied a "C-Spine", a medical procedure used to stabilize the neck and back in the event of a potential spine or neck injury; and treated the man for shock. Fitzell also began scooping sand and dirt with his bare hands and throwing it on the flames trying to extinguish the fire. As emergency rescue vehicles arrived at the scene, Fitzell and Philbrick continued rendering aid and assurance to the victim as Bourne Fire and Rescue used the "Jaws-of Life" to finally extract him from the twisted and charred wreck.

Staff Sgt. Brian Willette, Fitzell's supervisor, who arrived on the scene moments after the two soldiers began their heroic rescue said, "It was the most amazing thing I have ever seen." In total, from the time they arrived until the father was extracted from the wreck and taken away in an ambulance about an hour and a half passed.

As the ambulance pulled away Fitzell and Philbrick cleaned themselves off gathered their belongings and returned back to base to rest up for another day of training. After being treated and released from the hospital, the family is doing fine

Both Fitzell and Philbrick are in the Headquarters Co., 1-104th Infantry (Light) and serving on a homeland defense mission with Operation Noble Eagle II.

Fitzell, a highway traffic inspector with the Massachusetts Highway Department, has been in the Mass Guard for 13 years. He's the third generation from his family in the 104th Infantry. Philbrick is a full-time pharmacy technician and part-time paramedic from Chicopee. He just re-enlisted in the Guard and plans to attend the fire academy for his new position with the Chicopee Fire Department. Their units put each of them in for the Soldiers Medal.

101ST Officer Receives Pilot Safety Award of Distinction

By Master Sgt. Ken Wheeler

Pilots are known for as being highly skilled individuals who intensely learn their craft so that, in a combat situation, they can recover from situations that others might consider "flying on the edge."

On April 4, though he wasn't in a combat situation, Capt. Sean D. Halbrook of the 101st Fighter Squadron at Otis had to use all his flying skill in a situation that could have meant the loss of his F-15 Eagle. He saved himself and his plane. For his actions, Captain Halbrook recently was awarded the Air Combat Command Combat Edge - Pilot Safety Award of Distinction.

Capt. Halbrook was preparing to fly an instrument landing approach to Otis and was about 15 minutes into his training sortie when the F-15's heading system suddenly failed, temporarily leaving him not knowing which way he was going in relation to Otis. He was in the number two plane on a two-mile radar trail formation, flying at 1,500 feet, and on the base leg of the approach.

He immediately selected a back-up system, that normally would have provided a stable heading for an approach. Continuing to follow his flight leader, who was now on a his final approach, Captain Halbrook's horizontal situational indicator showed a full-scale deflection, indicating that instrument also was malfunctioning. He immediately rechecked the instrument landing frequency and verified the Otis identifier.

About this time, the flight leader called for landing gear to be lowered and flaps to be set for landing. When Captain Halbrook attempted to lower his gear and flaps, a warning tone sounded indicating that his left main landing gear was unsafe.

Captain Halbrook notified his flight leader and the two pilots aborted the landing approach, regrouping at about 10,000 feet where Captain Halbrook took the flight leader's position and performed a series of checklists, including visually checking the landing gear. As a result of that, it was decided that use of the runway's aircraft arresting system would be needed. Unfortunately, no arresting system was installed on the runway being used that day and the weather had deteriorated.

It was decided to try flying another instrument landing approach to runway 300/1, which gave Captain Halbrook a 15-knot tailwind, and land within the first 1,000 feet of the runway so that the nose gear would touch down before reaching the arresting cable, which was only 1,500 down the runway. All this would have to be done with a malfunctioning heading and instrument landing system.

By the time this decision was made, Captain Halbrook's backup heading system was drifting at a rate of 10 degrees per second, making it unusable. So he was going to have to fly in formation, using his flight leader's directions, to get below the weather and return to Otis.

Captain Halbrook then gave the lead back to his flight leader and the two flew in perfect formation till they reached the runway. After landing safely, Captain Halbrook's aircraft caught the approach end cable.

In nominating Captain Halbrook for the award, Col. Paul D. Worcester, 102nd Fighter Wing commander, said Captain Halbrook's... "quick, expert actions and superior pilot abilities were directly responsible for the safe recovery of a national asset."



Capt. Sean D. Halbrook of the 101st Fighter Squadron

A.T. Phone Home

By Spc. David Claffey, JFHQ-MA

Stretching down the East Coast, elements of the 253rd Combat Communication Group speak with each other often, but rarely get an opportunity to train together. That changed when units from Maine and Pennsylvania traveled to Otis Air Force Base for their annual training.

"This is like a real world mission for us," said Col. Andrew Urbansky, Commander of the 271st Combat Communications Squadron from Pennsylvania. "It is the first time in a while we have been able to get together with such a large amount of people. Because of the long distance between states, getting together like this is difficult, but the eye to eye contact and chance to meet someone you have been talking to through the phone for years is worth it."

While the group has an experienced base, the exercise focused on training some of the younger airmen to take more active roles. Combat communications is one of the most Guard-dependant job fields in the military, with almost 80 percent of the Air Force's resources invested in reserve forces. There is a good chance some of these folks will be activated.

"The operation tempo has been high," said Lt. Col. Patrick McNamara, Director of Personnel for the 253rd. "Our people need to be able to plug right into an active unit and augment them without any drop-off in quality."

The unit is like the phone, network and power company for the Air Force in the field, said McNamara. Combat communication squadrons are some of the first units called when preparing a captured air base or creating a new one.

"We provide the tools that command and control needs to function," said Urbansky. "All a fighter or bomber wing needs is a cement runway, and we can go in and set up a fully functional base. We pretty much do everything except dig the latrine."

The 253rd has sent airmen all over the globe, with Guard members working in Oman, Bosnia, Afghanistan and, most recently, Jordan. "A lot of our guys had never been called up before," said McNamara, "but after many years of training, they are excited to get out there. I can see there is huge amount of pride in the people we send overseas."

Constructing a communications center may sound like a lengthy process, but the airmen of the 253rd are efficient, said Urbansky. "We can make our first contact within two hours and have the whole operation setup in about 10 hours." The units from Pennsylvania and Maine gave each other advice and tips to keep the setup process as quick and smooth as possible.

"Sometimes units can find shortcuts that make the job easier," said Urbansky. "Even if we have different types of equipment, we do the same training. Technology may change, but our focus will remain the same - transferring information."

Technology is changing rapidly in the communication world, but the 253rd is at the forefront, said McNamara. Developments designed by a unit at Hanscom Air Force Base are sent directly to the group, keeping them on the edge of advanced tools.

The 253rd has been part of many recent deployments and the pace doesn't seem to be slowing. "In a warfare environment, passing information in a timely manner is vital," McNamara noted. "Whether 40 airmen needed or only two, we will keep our people ready."



Senior Airman Jim Tatum unfastens a wire connector during the dismantling of a radio transmitter. Part of the Pennsylvania National Guard, he and his fellow airmen trained at Otis Air Force Base as part of their annual training.

Photo by Spc. David Claffey, Massachusetts National Guard



Sgt. Mike Brown of the 271st Combat Communications Squadron adjusts the settings on a satellite dish during annual training. His unit worked with other units in the 253rd Combat Communications Group at Otis Air Force Base in Massachusetts.

Photo by Spc. Matthew Benedetti, Massachusetts National Guard

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